

MEMO TO: House Finance Committee Members

MEMO FROM: J. Michael Downey, President, RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Kwame Larbi, President, Local 1350, Medical Center
Alexis Santoro, Esq., Executive Director, RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Jim Cenerini, Legislative Affairs/Political Action Coordinator

DATE: April 14, 2021

RE: FY 2022 Budget Article 12 Section G-- Oppose

RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO opposes the proposed redesign of Eleanor Hospital. The current proposal would close the Regan and Adolph Meyer Buildings at the Cranston Campus. Only the Forensic unit, located at Benton Building, would remain open at the Cranston Campus. Council 94 maintains that a new plan should be created which keeps Regan, Benton, and Zambarano open.

Eleanor Slater Hospital acts as the provider of last resort for medically fragile patients, who require acute psychiatric care, Forensic Civil/Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity patients, and critical medical long-term care for elders requiring specialized services, such as ventilator beds.

RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO 2883 over 412 employees at the Pastore Medical Complex in Cranston, Rhode Island.

Council 94 opposes Budget Article 12 Section G, (pgs. 19-20), which would increase the rate reimbursements for privately operated nursing homes to care for ventilator bed and Severe Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) residents/patients.

This seemingly innocuous provision appears to be an attempt to speedily discharge many patients with complex needs to inappropriate care settings and close the Regan and Adolph Meyer buildings.

Additionally, the union has learned that some patients' families have objected to non-consensual release of private/unredacted medical information to private care facilities. There is an ongoing investigation into the alleged breach of confidentiality.

While Council 94 has had a generally professional/transparent relationship with the Secretariat/Office of Health and Human Services (OHHS), the same can not be said for the Department of Behavioral Health Care, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH).

Unfortunately, the proposed ESH reorganization is shrouded in secrecy. Our relationship has degraded to the point that the unions and employees have little confidence in BHDDH's current management team.

Therefore, we respectfully oppose Article 12 Section G and urge the rejection of this provision.

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